

David T. Denny

Name: David T. Denny International Middle School	Enrollment: 870
Address: 2601 SW Kenyon Street	Nickname: Dolphins
Configuration: 6-8	Colors: Blue and white
Newspaper: none	Annual: none



David T. Denny, ca. 1952 SPSA 103-5

It took some time before a second junior high school was built in southwest Seattle on property purchased in 1945. Although the new school was urgently needed because Madison Junior High was overcrowded, as the November 16, 1950, *West Seattle Herald* reported, “The Korean war and other construction difficulties” would hold up completion of the new school until September 1952.

Denny Junior High School opened in 1952, the year of the centennial of the Denny party’s landing at Alki Point, and was named after David T. Denny, an early Northern European settler to the region and an early member of the Seattle School Board. The brother of Arthur Denny, David was involved in many real estate ventures and the development of Seattle’s streetcar system. The school opened to 1,030 students. Hughes was overcrowded that year, so both 6th grade teachers and their students were assigned to rooms at Denny.

The junior high school facility was single-story with five buildings on three levels joined by breezeways. It was comprised of 35 classrooms, a library, combination lunchroom-auditorium, and a gymnasium.

Enrollment at the new school increased with the rapid population growth of southwest Seattle. In spring 1955, portables were first placed on the grounds as extra classrooms. The first five graduating classes moved on to West Seattle High School. After 1957, they went to neighboring Chief Sealth High School.

A 4,000-seat stadium serving both the high school and junior high was constructed to the east of Denny in 1960. The Southwest Community Center pool, which was on the adjoining property, was and continues to be used by both schools.

Enrollment at Denny hit a peak at over 1,600 students between 1959 and 1963, with 22 portables in use. The 9th grade classes were housed at Sealth due to a lack of space at Denny for a few years prior to 1961. About two-thirds of the 9th graders attended Chief Sealth High School by 1974. In 1982-83, Denny went to 7-8 configuration. Sixth graders were added in 1989-90.

Principal Joan Allen, well-loved by her students and respected by her colleagues, died in the middle of the 1992-93 school year. A garden on the school grounds was dedicated to her memory.

In the early 2000s, Denny had two “elementary style” all-day 6th grade classrooms in addition to regular middle school scheduling. A schoolwide Performance Celebration highlighted student artwork, essays, poetry, wood projects, crafts, PE demonstrations, musical performances, computer projects, and more. The outstanding PE program included swimming classes, wrestling, soccer, Ultimate Frisbee, basketball, track, and volleyball.

Starting in 2000, the Sealth stadium and shared athletic fields underwent many changes (see Sealth).

In June 2004, Superintendent Raj Manhas recommended a no-cost exchange of property interests with the City of Seattle Parks Department for the Denny Middle School/Southwest Community Center site and the Aki Kurose/Brighton Playfield site. That exchange deeded a portion of the parking lot that serviced the athletic complex to the parks department, allowing expansion of their building. The exchange did not impact current operations and did not apply restrictions for future development at the Denny site. In the exchange, the district

Details:

Name: **David T. Denny Junior High School**

Location: 8402 30th Avenue SW

Building: 35-room, 1 story brick

Architect: Mallis & DeHart

Site: 32 acres

1950: Named on May 5

1952: Opened in September

2010: School renamed David T. Denny International Middle School

2011: School closed in June; demolition began in July; students moved to new school

2013: Tennis courts and softball field opened (DA Hogan; BEX III)



David T. Denny, 1958 SPSA 103-3

Details:

Name: **David T. Denny International Middle School**

Location: 2601 SW Kenyon Street

Architect: Bassetti Architects

Site: 17.45 acres (shared campus with Chief Sealth)

2009: Construction started on new school

2011: School opened at new site (BEX III); Sept. 6 ribbon-cutting ceremony

Design. The tour showed the new science facilities, teen health center, library, and gymnasium, among other improvements.

The plan initially drew concerns from some parents, because the new 130,000-square-foot school was not only going to be close to Chief Sealth International High School, but the two schools were literally going to be connected. To help allay concerns, the principals from both schools hosted community logistics meetings.

In 2010, the name was changed to David T. Denny International Middle School after the school applied for international middle school status. At the time of the name change, the international program was already in place—including dual language immersion learning—and the name change had been strongly welcomed and supported by the school's community.

When Denny Middle School was completed in 2011, a new 20,000-square-foot galleria/commons connected Denny and Sealth. This space between the two schools offers the flexibility of either separate school, joint school,

gained property that part of Aki Kurose had been built on, which had been previously leased from the parks department by the district.

Denny Middle School was considered for landmark preservation in 2007, but the Landmarks Preservation Board denied the nomination on April 16, 2007. That December, the School Board approved replacement of Denny and the modernization of Chief Sealth. Renderings of the new school's design as a joint campus were shared with the public in May 2009. Since both Denny and Sealth had international programs, it allowed students to cross-attend classes. Historically, the Denny band participated with Sealth students, creating an opportunity to strengthen the ties between the programs.

The first media tour of the new middle school that was constructed on the north end of the Chief Sealth High School campus was held August 1, 2009, and featured the project manager from DK Arch



David T. Denny, 2023 c.Arthur Ross SPSA 103-54

or community uses. The Denny construction included butterfly roofs, which allowed windows to be higher. As a result, classrooms receive more natural light and there is less demand for artificial light in the classrooms. Wood from the Sealth remodel was reclaimed and incorporated into both projects, including the hardwood bleacher seats, which were refinished and used as reception counters, classroom display ledges, and windowsills. There is a green-roof demonstration project as part of the overall sustainability, construction, and design.



David T. Denny, 2011 SPSA 103-52

Meanwhile, demolition of the old Denny Middle School began in 2011 to make room for a new softball field and tennis center for the schools. A small crowd came to watch the 55-foot chimney come down on July 22. Four acres from the original Denny site, property that adjoins the athletic complex, are reserved for a future school site such as an elementary school or K-8 school.

In 2022, Denny had a partnership with the Teachers College Reading and Writing Project through Columbia University. Denny also became a Writing Workshop school in 2007, and in 2010 officially became a Reading Workshop school. Denny also was known for its middle school music programs with a diverse offering of music classes from band and orchestra to percussion and mariachi. Students routinely traveled for jazz and music festivals, including the Lionel Hampton Jazz Festival in Idaho, the Reno Jazz Festival, and the Heritage Music Festival in Vancouver, British Columbia.



David T. Denny, 2023 c.Arthur Ross SPSA 103-53